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AUTHOR Bandlamudi, Lakshmi
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ABSTRACT

Historically, the definition of culture has been a much debated issue for anthropologists. While some anthropologists define culture as being invisible to the subject, others have conceptualized culture as knowledge and symbol. This study explores the ways in which culture reveals itself to another culture. Subjects (N=24) were first generation immigrant children and immigrant children living in the borough of Queens in New York City. Subjects, who were ages 13-15, were interviewed regarding their experiences of being bicultural in the United States. The interviews were structured to enable the subjects to define and reflect on their intuitive understanding of a variety of abstract relationships: self/other, self/culture, own culture/alien culture, and so on. Analyses of the interviews indicated that individuals locate themselves in a cultural matrix and have an understanding, at varying conceptual levels, that the basis for their behavior, thought, and thought processes is cultural. In the wake of biculturalism one observes the changing self, and recognizes the cultural ramifications. As a result self/culture are tightly intertwined; understanding of one leads to an understanding of the other. Such an understanding is triggered by facing the otherness, being seen and understood by the other. The narratives of the subjects also indicated that one understands self with varying degrees of differentiation and hierarchic integration, as a cultural being, connected to and determined by various cultural institutions. Such an awareness of cultural ramifications may be unique, if not exclusive to their experiences in their adopted land. (LLL)

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Adolescents' Conceptualization of Self/Culture in the wake of Bi-Culturalism: An Exploratory Cross - Cultural Study

Lakshmi Bandlamudi

Graduate School, City University of New York, New York.

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Historically, the definition of culture has been a much debated issue for anthropologists. In recent years, " culture " as a mediating factor in gaining consciousness has gained considerable prominence in various branches of psychology, thereby bridging anthropology and psychology. This union has also given birth to a new field called "cultural psychology" (Stigler, Shweder, and Herdt, 1990), in which the cognizing, experiencing and evaluating individual is seen as embedded in complex cultural matrix. Richard Shweder (1990) in introducing the idea of "cultural psychology" describes it as,

> "the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for human kind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self and emotion".

Researchers in the area of human development have pointed out that culture mediates cognition (Cole, Gay, Glick & Sharp, 1971), thought and thought processes (Cole and Scribner, 1974), notions of self (Rosaldo, 1984), concept of person (Schweder & Bourne, 1984), moral evaluations (Much and Schweder,1978), emotions (Levy,1984), and a host of other human phenomena. John Ogbu (1988) points out that non-anthropologists studying human development tend to think of culture as a person's immediate environment rather than as social, techno-economic and psychological adaptation worked out in the course of people's history. While disciplines differ in their definition and treatment of 'culture', the central question in the current study is how do individuals through their own subjective experience define, understand, experience , use and talk about "culture" and in turn define and construct self ?

Social cognition as a special topic has become a major area of research for developmental psychologists in recent years (Damon, 1977; Selman, 1980; Spencer, 1985; Broughton, 1978). Research in this area is often an extension and adaptation of the cognitive developmental theory of Piaget (1970) who was particularly concerned with the growth of cognitive functions. Research in the area of social cognition uses some measure of cognitive capacity, such as abstract thinking and logical reasoning as an indicator of development. The underlying assumption is that the social world, like the physical world has certain properties and is knowable. It is knowable mainly by taking the perspective of the other and constructing the world in the mind. The ability to take the perspective of the other is a major cognitive milestone in Piaget's theory (1970). It is this ability that facilitates the child to overcome egocentrism. The child becomes decentered and learns that there are other perspectives.

In the area of social cognition, "role taking" becomes central in children's understanding of friendship (Selman, 1980), race (Spencer, 1985; Alejandro-wright, 1985), social rules (Turiel, 1978), self (Damon & Hart, 1982) and so on. The goal of such socio-cognitive studies is to define and explain distinct qualitative stages in children's' conceptualization of various aspects of social and cultural world. The impetus for many of these studies came after Kohlberg(1969), who used the cognitive developmental model to study moral reasoning and moral judgement. Since then, there has been an increasing interest in extending this model to study the development of children's understanding of social world.

A major goal of the studies within this paradigm is to describe various stages and sequence in which development occurs. Selman (1980) conducted a series of studies to investigate children's conceptions of individuals, friendships, and peer group relations. In all these studies he poses hypothetical dilemmas to children and examines their reasoning. From these studies he outlined a series of stages in children's understanding of individuals, friendships and peer group interaction. The stages proceed from a very simplistic notions to complex systems. For example, children's understanding of self proceeds from a very simplistic view of self as a "physical entity" at stage 0 to being an "intentional subject" at stage I, which is unilateral in nature. The individual then proceeds to understand self as an "introspective self" and then as a "stable personality" to "complex self systems". Turiel (1978) also has traced the developmental changes in children's understanding and use of social rules. These studies posit that development, whether it be in the understanding of social, moral, or physical concepts develops in a series of regular steps. The child by first differentiating the 'self' from the 'other' progressively learns to take the viewpoint of others and thereby constructs the social world around.

A cognitive developmental framework in the study of self has its roots in the philosophy of William James who construes self as a "knower"(Quoted by Damon and Hart, 1982). James identifies two different aspects of self; self as a subject - the "I", and self as an object of one's knowledge, the "ME". The ' Me' aspect of self is defined by the sum of various constituents of self, such as the

'physical Me', the 'social Me' and the 'spiritual Me', and so on. James argues that individuals have a tendency to organize these various constituents into a hierarchical order, for instance the 'physical Me' at the bottom and the 'spiritual Me' at the top. A similar argument is made by Mead (1934), who argues that any study if self has to take into account both "self-as-a-knower" and "self-as-known". Psychological studies emerging out of this broad theoretical framework assumes duality between the subject and and the object (Lewis and Brooks-Gunn, 1979; Damon and Hart, 1982). These researchers argue such a dichotomy is useful for empirical investigation and attempt to study the interaction between the two.

Research coming from the cognitive developmental model, share a particular world view and a frame of reference at the core. They make some normative assumptions despite some differences among themselves, about human nature and the course that human beings take in understanding the world around them. For example, Kohlberg (1969) argues that post conventional level in which abstract moral principles are reasoned, follows a conventional level in which social conventions and rules are understood, followed and articulated. Thus in Kohlberg's scheme the moral order and social order are structured hierarchically; the former placed over the later. Turiel (1978), on the other hand argues that the moral and social order are two different domains and the development of both follow a certain sequence. The notion of 'sequence' is key to the cognitive developmental model.

While the Piagetian tradition has generated a number of studies in the area of social cognition, the tradition, nevertheless has been subjected to harsh criticism. Some common criticisms against this framework is that the theory is too 'ahistorical', very 'individualistic' and hardly accounts for the cultural, social and economic factors, and does not explain 'processes' (Broughton, 1981; Buck-Morss, 1975; Walkerdine, 1988, Glick, 1981). As a result some researchers have either dispensed with some of the elements of the theory or have modified the theory. For instance, some Afro-American psychologists (Nobles, 1980; Ogbu, 1988) have pointed out the Eurocentric bias inherent in Piaget's theory, while others have systematically modified or adapted some core elements of the theory, especially the constructivist view to study conceptions of race (Alejandro-Wright, 1985), cultural cognition (Spencer, 1985), and Black identity (Cross Jr, 1985). Wade Nobles (1980), drawing upon the African philosophy points out that the Jamesian notion of 'I', and 'Me' is not sufficient to explain the notion of self among Afro-Americans. Instead, he argues that in addition to 'I' and 'Me', the 'We' is an important component of self in the African ontology. Recognizing the importance of 'we' in African psyche, Semaj (1985) has put forth 3 levels of Extended Self Identity - the collective, Alien and Diffused among Afro-Americans.

One underlying assumption that cuts across all the studies reviewed so far is that children's understanding of the physical or social world proceeds systematically in a step-wise fashion. Therefore the scientific enterprise has been to identify various stages, describe them, and state how long each stage lasts, and when

change occurs. As a result, the focus within this tradition is completely on the individual divorced from cultural and ecological systems. The questions that remain unanswered are, how and what cultural and social factors enhance or inhibit development. Do children simply interact with the objects or people and construct the world around them through their own cognitive processes, or should the meanings that they construct have some relevance to the cultural setting in which they are embedded. In other words should the meanings that one constructs be useful for one's adaptation in his/her cultural environment? This is better answered if we formulate the question as, how does culture mediate cognition, or in the words of Valerie Walkerdine (1988),

> "..how do children come to read the myriad of arbitrary signifiers - the words, gestures, objects, etc.- with which they are surrounded, such that their arbitrariness is banished and they appear to have that meaning which is conventional?" (p3)

Such a question which is dialectical in nature does away with simple dichotomies like subject/object, physical/social and so on. From this perspective Glick (1985) points out that the 'actual child' in contrast to Piaget's 'epistemic child' is embedded in a culture and is held accountable for culturally appropriate behaviors. Glick argues that the child simply does not interact with a pendulum to discover and construct the scientific principles underlying it, but the cultural settings, for example, access to pendulum (economic and social class plays a central role here), beliefs about pendulum (individual history and cultural history becomes central) has a certain bearing upon the meanings that the child assigns to a

pendulum. However if the child's growing apparatus allows, then his or her thought may transcend the given cultural meanings. So in this formulation culture and cognition create each other through a dialectical process. In the dialectical system, the self is not constructed via interaction with the other, but self gets constituted or realized through social, cultural and ideological practices.

The underlying assumption in cognitive model is that the world is a "text" and the knowing subject decodes it by applying the principles of rationality. The cognizing subject (knower) differentiates from the world (known) and constructs the meaning of the world by applying principles of logic, even while being located within the world (known). It is the knower who is the ultimate arbiter of the truth.

This approach has its origin in "structuralism" - a theoretical tradition that is committed to explaining the invariant sequence in which children develop by understanding and organizing the world around them; whether it be physical or social. The focus in such an approach is on the structure and not on the content of thought, on universals rather than specifics, and on thought or patterns of thought rather than behavior or emotions. This philosophical tradition is committed to making broad claims about mind, knowledge, human beings, language, myths and a host of other human phenomena. Therefore what this tradition looks for is universals - the commonality that exists among human beings. The motto here is "deep down people are the same"; therefore the surface manifestations are to be disregarded and the common thread that

holds the system together is sought after. It is this "common thread" that is worthy of scientific investigation. It is the Platonic ideal (doctrine of forms) that operates in this system of thought as Shweder (1990) explains, that this psychology

> "...assumes that its subject matter is a presupposed central (abstract and transcendent = deep or interior or hidden) processing mechanism inherent (fixed and universal) in human beings, which enables them to think (classify, infer, remember, imagine, etc.), experience (emote, feel, desire, need, self, reflect, etc.), act (strive, prefer, choose, evaluate, etc.) and learn" (p4).

What the abstract rationalism ignores is the position (social, historical, immediate context) of the cognizing subject, and the researcher studying the phenomena. Knowledge is always from a perspective and it is partial and constructed from a philosophical standpoint and never absolute, as Goldmann (1976) says,

> "To do positive science in the human sciences we are obliged to be philosophical: to reflect on the status of knowledge, on the status of the knowing subject, and on its place in the elaboration of truths" (p91).

The fundamental difference, as Goldmann points out, between contemporary structuralism and dialectical positions is that the former rejects any concept of functionality. By this formula, knowledge, theories, concepts are instrumental and purposeful; therefore theories (whether it be child's theory of the world or adult's theory of the child) are not merely set of facts but also set of tools. The relationship is multi-layered. Facts are theory laden, theories are value laden and values are history laden (Haraway, 1989). It is this historicity that is missing in Piaget's genetic epistemology (Wartofsky, 1983).

Another criticism that could be raised against the empirical research conducted within the cognitive developmental framework in the area of social cognition is its methods. Typically research in this area follows similar methods used in studying cognition, and therefore makes similar assumptions; that is knowledge in social domain is similar to knowledge in cognitive domain. One major flaw in making such an assumption is, as Glick (1978) points out, people do not behave as objects. There is reciprocity involved in the social domain. Hence in social transactions we anticipate responses from others and behave in culturally appropriate manner. As a result of such anticipation our speech and thought becomes what Bakhtin (1986) calls as "dialogic". In proposing a methodology for human sciences Bakhtin (1986) makes a distinction between physical and social sciences, in that he states,

> " the exact sciences constitute a monologic form of knowledge: the intellect contemplates a thing and expounds upon it. There is only one subject here - cognizing (contemplating) and speaking (expounding). In opposition to the subject there is only a voiceless thing. Any object of knowledge can be perceived and cognized as a thing. But a subject as such cannot be perceived and studied as a thing, for as a subject it cannot, while remaining a subject become voiceless, and consequently, cognition of it can only be dialogic" (p161)

Thus Bakhtin's theory of dialogism places a heavy emphasis on self and other in the construction of knowledge in the realm of human sciences. Meanings are constructed through a social intercourse and this calls for interdependence between the 'self' and the 'other'. For Bakhtin the 'other' is crucial in accomplishing

individual consciousness. Understanding comes not merely from the individual's own observation and knowledge construction, but through human interactions. Bakhtin locates meanings not "within the individual" as the abstract objectivists would have it, but rather "in between" the self and the other. While the former tradition states "I own the meaning", Bakhtin suggests " We own the meaning". Unlike Kant's "transcendental subject" or Piaget's "epistemic subject" who has to overcome perspectivistic restraints, Bakhtin argues that individuals experience and view the world from a unique position that they occupy in the world at a particular time in a particular place. It is interconnectedness of time and space that Bakhtin calls as "chronotope" (Bakhtin, 1981). Therefore any awareness, whether it be of the self or of the world is achieved not through logical deductions in a final form, but is always in a dialogised form incorporating the "transgredient" elements of multiple voices in the society. The "solipsistic I" that Piaget undermines, Bakhtin celebrates and calls it an immediate reality. It is the uniqueness of one's axiological position that gives birth to the necessity of the other (Bakhtin. 1990) It may be pointed out that Piaget was primarily interested in epistemology, therefore the focus on the growing child was merely a way of theorizing about the mind, whereas Bakhtin was interested in aesthetics and cognition was the starting point for him. Bakhtin argues that in any activity, where the self does not acknowledge the other, the event becomes a cognitive activity. However if the other's consciousness consumes the self, the event becomes a religious one. The aesthetic activity

begins only when the self and other are on an equal footing and enter into a dialogue. Bakhtin (1990) says,

> "An absolute consciousness, a consciousness that has nothing transgredient to itself, nothing situated outside itself and capable of delimiting it from outside-such a consciousness cannot be "aestheticized"; one can commune in it, but cannot be seen as a whole that is capable of being consummated. An aesthetic event can take place only when there are two participants present; it presupposes two noncoinciding consiousness". (p22)

Therefore Bakhtin, like Vygotsky (1978) locates the origin of meanings within the social realm. Vygotsky goes on to say that every psychological functioning takes place twice: first on the social level - between people, and later on the individual level - inside the individual. And through a series of developmental events the interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal one.

If the origin of higher mental function is in the realm of 'culture' according to the Vygotskian and Bakhtinian school of thought, the question then is how do we understand the nature and properties of culture. How do we define culture? How do we conceptualize culture? If thought, thought processes, intelligence, emotions and a host of other human phenomena are culturally determined, then it is imperative to understand the ways in which culture operates.

Typically, anthropologists have given several explanations about the nature of culture, and its relationship to everyday experience. In his landmark book Clifford Geertz (1973) defines culture as "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their

knowledge about and attitudes towards life ". Likewise, Robert Levine (1984) defines culture as, " a shared organization of ideas that includes the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community and the meanings of communicative actions". The Soviet semioticians, Lurii Lotman and Boris Uspenskii (1985) on the other hand frame the question about culture in a different way. The question for them is not what is culture, but rather how do humans as social beings define cultural systems at different historical moments. They posit that culture may be understood as "non hereditary memory of a group, expressed in a certain system of prohibitions and commandments". Lotman and Uspenskii describe culture not as a shared social code, but it includes the anamolies as well. It is this centrifugal force that brings about transformation in the society. Culture, therefore is the site for social struggle, as posited by them,

> " A culture's need for self-description, coupled with the necessity, at a certain stage, for unified structuring of its values, has a strong effect on the culture being described. In creating its own model for itself, a culture has an active effect on the process of self-organization; it organizes itself hierarchically, canonizing some texts and excluding others" (p31)

Lotman (1985) goes on to say that human behavior within the cultural system is organized according to two principles, the first one being the ordinary everyday behavior that members take for granted to the point that they naturalize it, the second one being ritualististic - includes rites, state ceremonies etc. The first one is like learning one's native language upon which "behavioral texts" are constructed- a concept that Vygotsky (1978) refers to as "everyday concepts", whereas the later is learnt systematically

either through instruction or formal initiation that Vygotsky calls as "scientific concepts" and this is highly semioticized and "narrative texts" are constructed on this principle.

While some anthropologists define culture as being "invisible to the subject", that is, one views the world and life in general through the cultural lens, and yet these lens do not exist at the conscious level for the individual. Others like Goodenough have conceptualized culture as knowledge and symbol (D'Andrade, 1984). According to the "culture as knowledge" formula, the individual possesses some knowledge about cultural rules - such as where to live, what to eat, how to eat, how to express oneself, how to behave and so on. While this formulation has been useful in generating number of research studies, it does not explain the complex nature of culture. For instance one may ask, do all the members of a given culture agree upon the prevalent rules ? Is there no variability ? What factors account for the change in the culture ? An inadequate explanation of some of these questions gives us a static account of culture. Yet another important criticism is, whether cultural systems are found 'inside' or 'outside' the minds of the individuals (D'Andrade, 1984). Do cultural systems exist at the level of conscious awareness for the individual ? If yes, how and if not, when and how does it rise to the conscious level for the individual ? This question is succinctly explained by Bakhtin (1986):

> " In the realm of culture, outsideness is the most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly, but never exhaustively, because

> there will be other cultures that see and understand even more ". (p.7)

Bakhtin's theory of dialogics therefore suggests that deep meanings are revealed only when it comes in contact with the other. Such an encounter leads to a dialogue that transcends a one sided view of particular meanings, whether it be self, culture, or utterances. It is such a dialogic encounter that compels one to raise questions about foreign culture and one's own culture simultaneously. Bakhtin suggests that such a questioning may not occur till it encounters the 'other'.

In a similar vein, Lotman (1985) posits that everyday life - the taken for granted behavior and social codes are brought into focus when the individual is culturally displaced (as in the case of immigration), or when the society undergoes a revolution or rapid social change. He takes a historical perspective on the Russian culture and observes that during and after the Petrine period, in which, Russia was grappling with issue of whether to be Asiatic or European, everyday behavior became a theatrical act as Lotman observes,

> "A direct result of the change in everyday behavior was the ritualization and semioticization of those spheres of life that would be considered "natural" and nonsignifying in a culture that had undergone an inversion. The effect was the opposite of that "privateness" which struck the Russian observer of European life.... Everyday behavior became a set of signs for everyday behavior. The semioticization of everyday life, the degree to which it was consciously perceived as a sign, increased sharply. Daily life acquired the characteristics of the theater".(1985. p70)

From the Bakhtinian framework, the current study attempts to explore the ways in which culture reveals itself to another culture. Some broad questions in this study are,

a. What are the ways in which individuals narrate their experiences about cultural conflicts ?

b. What aspects about themselves and their cultures do they feel are revealed when they encounter members of another culture?

c. How does such a revelation lead to an understanding of the elements and properties of culture?

d. How is 'self' understood in this process - that is in this dialogic encounter, and what kind of self identity with respect to ethnicity is formed?

In order to investigate these questions, first generation immigrant children (i.e. their parents were immigrants) and immigrant children were studied. This choice of sample follows an assumption that subjects who are typically 'bicultural' are constantly trying to balance between two cultures, very often radically different ones. This acculturation process, I presume, forces one to come to grips with the invisible properties of culture. Acculturation, as J.W.Berry (1980) defines it, is not a passive or colorless absorption, but rather one that triggers dynamics internal to the cultural groups involved. Thus one could hypothesize that such a dissonance in the cultural world of the individual may lead to a deeper understanding of culture or perhaps as Lotman (1985) says to semioticization of various aspects of self

and culture. The central question in this study is not " what is culture? ", but rather "how is culture experienced?" . Thus the approach here is phenomenological; the subjects defining and constructing the reality around them. Such a questioning follows what Geertz views as a scientific enterprise;

> " If you want to understand what a science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and certainly not at what its apologists say about it, you should look at what the practioners of it do " (1973).

METHOD

SUBJECTS

Participants in this study were 13 - 15 year old boys and girls; the average age was 14.25 years, residing in the multi ethnic borough of Queens in New York city. The subjects were mostly first generation immigrant children (that is, their parents immigrated to United States) and some immigrant children (these children lived a part of their life in another country). Subjects were selected from three different ethnic groups:

(a) Asian Indian and Pakistani

(b) Oriental (Chinese, Taiwanese)

(c) European (Greek, Italian, Albanian, Slavic & Rumanian)

There were 4 boys and 4 girls in each ethnic group, and therefore there were 24 subjects in all. All Asian Indian subjects, 3 Oriental subjects and one subject from the European sample were recruited through personal contact of the researcher. The rest of the subjects were recruited from a public high school in Queens. This point must be kept in mind while evaluating the results, since the data were collected in different settings. Those who were recruited from a public school had a more rigid and constrained setting to express their views, than the ones who were interviewed at their homes which was a more relaxed environment.

PROCEDURES

Demographic information such as, place of birth, frequency of visit to the native country and time of arrival in the United States was obtained from all the subjects (see Table I and Appendix I). Semi- structured interviews were conducted with all 24 subjects. The questions required the subjects to share their experiences of being bi-cultural in United States .

They were initially asked to describe themselves and were asked to explain and reflect on the number of ways in which they were similar and different from the kids they go to school with. Such a question with appropriate probing enabled the subjects to talk about cultural differences, parenting practices, conflicts arising as a result of bi-culturalism, and also define and explain the properties of culture as it was experienced phenomenologically.

The interview was structured so as to enable the subjects to define and reflect on their intuitive understanding of a variety of abstract relationships: self/other, self/culture, own culture/alien culture, and so on. This was essentially the 'clinical interview' method and was based on subjects' own life experiences rather than reflecting and reasoning upon hypothetical dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1969), or vignettes (Selman, 1980).

MEASURES

From the narratives three different themes were identified; and within each theme 5 conceptual categories were drawn. The three themes are not treated as separate entities but rather seen as related categories, or rather the phenomenon about self/culture viewed from different dimensions. The "genre" in the narrative is taken as the unit of analysis in the current study. Bakhtin (1986) defines genre as "a way of looking", made up of utterances. Meaning is located for Bakhtin not in individual sentences but in utterances and this process is distinctly social. He says, " each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances. These we may call speech genres" (p60).

The categories within each theme were conceptually and qualitatively distinct from one another. Five conceptual categories (See Figure I) within each theme were identified according to the Wernerian orthogenetic principle of development which states that whenever development occurs, it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack to differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation, articulation, and hierarchic integration (Werner, 1957). The three themes were:

a. " **Self within the cultural system** " - which looks at where individuals locate themselves in the cultural matrix, and the ways and extent to which one differentiates from and integrates with the other. How is 'self' defined in relation to the complex set of social relations ? What is the degree to which the complexity of

social relations is understood and narrated by the individual? These questions provided a broad framework for deriving the categories.

b. " **Conceptualization of culture** " - this theme examined the subjects' understanding of culture. The five conceptual categories were drawn by examining how the subjects experienced, defined and reflected upon the notion of 'culture'. How did they theorize culture and how did they substantiate their notions with appropriate examples. These questions provided a broad framework within which the categories were drawn.

c. " **Self - Identity** " - this theme examined identity with respect to ethnicity and broad cultural identity, that is, American identity. This theme essentially looked at how the subject identifies himself/herself; the extent to which, and the ways in which they maintain their own cultural roots and the extent to which, and the ways in which they take on the broad cultural values. Ethnic identity and broad cultural identity here are neither defined as a continuum or dichotomized variables, but rather what is examined is the dynamics that operate in the formation of self-identity.

CATEGORY I

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

SC1 Non-relational Subjectivism/Objectivism

In this category self is either completely differentiated from the rest of the society and/or totally submerged in it. The subject does not explain why he or she relates to some and not to others and in what way one relates to the other. Typically the narrative

follows the pattern, " I/people are all the same/different. The reasons are very unelaborated and probing does not yield any further explanations. For example when this subject was asked to describe ways in which he is similar and different from the kids he goes to school with, he responds,

> " nothing really..pretty much normal..nothing really different..not really..nothing that I really know....".
>
> On further probing, the subject says,
>
> " we have to go to school, yeah..we have to...parents make us go..if we hang out and stuff like that we can't.." (and gives a shrug).

Knowledge about self and society is seen as being obvious and self-evident that requires no explanation, as one subject says, "we are all the same..we do the same stuff..like play sports.. you know" Subjects often view the researcher's questioning with suspicion or annoyance. To an initial question, such as "tell me something about yourself, one subject says,

> " I don't know..my mind is blank right now..I can't figure out anything..I don't know...I can't think..nobody asks me these things..I don't have any answers for them..".

The subject here informs what they do and when asked for reasons for their subjective experience they say, " I like it or I enjoy it ". Thus the reasons for underlying causes for human behavior, thought, thought processes, whether it be about self or other are not given. So the connection between concrete activity and one's personality or self is either not made or not spoken about in the interview.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

C1 PHYSICALISTIC

Culture is understood purely in terms of food, clothing, physical appearance, holidays observed, languages spoken, gods worshipped and so on. For example, one subject says,

> " culture..kind of speaking the language... I speak Greek at home and I know to write a little ...I am taking Greek now in high school. My parents are Greek...I don't know anything about Greek. They eat Greek foods... my grandparents are like old Greek and stuff like that... stupid things....I don't know ".

Typically in this category the subject does not go beyond the physicalistic explanation. Another subject says that culture is,

> " ... a way of life. It is your language..it is your religion...it is the way you speak...that's it..different language ".

In this category the subject often pleads ignorance (I don't know or I can't think) or emphatically draws boundaries as to what constitutes culture, like language, religion , food habits. In general culture is understood as a given as mentioned by this subject,

> " I don't know..I can't change that.. so I am Chinese.. I don't even know Chinese ".

SELF IDENTITY

SI 1 PERSONAL

The individual describes self in terms of personal interests, personality traits, family background, etc, and the individual does

not affiliate with any particular group whether it be ethnic or national. For example, one subject says,

> " I don't really express myself as a Chinese .. I don't know anything about.. I really don't even want to know... people are the same stuff ".

The subject does not identify himself as being 'American' either. Typically subjects in this category do not report experiencing any cultural conflict; as a result the concept of biculturalism does not exist. In the absence of any conflict, subjects report that they do not seriously think of ethnicity or nationality. The subjects in this category think of themselves as individuals having normal tastes and personality traits (like all other kids), as one subject says,

> " I hang out with my friends most of the time..really nothing big..nothing you know to talk about.. yeah.. I like pretty much disco..dance music..sometimes all sorts of music.. I don't like school.. I can't wait till I finish it".

Subjects in this category do not talk in terms of group affiliation whether it be ethnicity, language or any other stratifying factors in a society.

In general, CATEGORY I in all three themes, the narratives are brief and the subject does not respond to researcher's probing questions. Such probes are often responded with a surprise or a doubtful gesture.

CATEGORY II

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

SC2 RELATIONAL - UNILATERAL

The individual makes connections in society based on either interests, likes, dislikes, or ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality and other stratifying factors in a society. The essential theme is, " I associate myself with so and so....because I like it or I am comfortable with...", and so on. For example one subject said,

> "..kids that I am with most of the times they have different religion..they celebrate different holidays.. the way that I am same is most of my friends..we have same average..we just like same things like music..club music..and some of my friends are into new music and I really don't like that..you know..what I am doing..we just like the same thing".

Another boy said,

> " You feel better when you are with people of your own nationality... so you just talk..and other people understand you more..and then like we communicate and understand each other more...than with someone from a different nationality ".

However when asked to give examples the subject does not elaborate. Such observations and statements are not well substantiated with suitable examples. The key difference between this category and the previous one is that the subject recognizes similarities and differences but does not articulate them. Subjects take into account various factors like religious practices, languages spoken, cultural customs that produces differences between cultures and reports them, but they do not explore how these factors influences one's behavior, thought or thought processes.

The dynamics of self's relation to the 'other' is very unidimensional, that is, " I associate myself with so and so " and this is not coupled with " they associate with me for such and such reasons ". Unlike the previous category in which the subject is either fully submerged within or totally differentiated from the cultural system, the individual here differentiates from the other in a simplistic fashion, that is, the differentiated 'me' versus the undifferentiated or the generalized 'other'. The individual here describes 'self' in terms of relationship with family, peers, school etc. For example, one subject says,

> " I hang out with nicer kind of people...not with the kind of people that are bad...and do drugs and all that... be nice to other people... well, it is passed off from my father.. what he teaches me, to be good.. not to be with bad people.. like the Italian values.. my parents come from Italy ".

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

C2 COMPARATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE

Culture in this category is understood as set of norms, values that determines individual behavior. These norms and values are understood in comparison with another culture. Similarities and differences between cultures, particularly in terms of outward behavior, likes, dislikes, personality traits are drawn. Thus, the narrative consists of stereotyped impressions of culture, with no underlying explanations for such traits. Therefore the central theme in understanding culture is, " this is the way people are in here..and over there ". For example one boy says,

> "..... the schools are different, the jobs are different.. the money is less over there.. they have animals in their homes like chickens... they help each other there (In Italy), here (America) people go to a different school system.. families are not that close here ".

The subject here recognizes cultural differences and reports them; however, he does not go beyond the description to explore the reasons for such traits, or does not explain how environmental factors mediates a given cultural system. The subjects talk of various cultural practices like food, religion, personality traits (Chinese are quieter and Americans are talkative and more social) and so on, often drawing sharp distinctions. For instance one subject gave a very detailed account of differences in church practices between Slavic Church and Greek Orthodox Church and thus defines culture according to these practices. Unlike the the subjects in the following categories, the individual in this category does not probe into how these practices influence thought or thought processes. So the level of analysis is only up to the the outward behavior as observed by the individual. Unlike the previous category in which understanding of culture is in pure physicalistic terms (food, clothing, appearance and so on), the subject here elaborates on and describes various cultural practices, rituals and so on, and thus adds a social dimension to his/her understanding of culture. The key difference between this category and the following categories is that the subject merely reports and does not reason, and the analysis is on <u>behavior</u> and not <u>thought</u>, as this girl explains the meaning of culture,

> " it is just Indian culture... like go to the temple.. the temple is so different,, Indian

> gods and all that.. with ten million names.. there are lots of gods..one for every aspect of like health, wealth, marriage.. there are gods for protection, creation and destruction.. not every religion is like that.. ".

Thus the subject brings a comparative perspective to her understanding of culture, but when asked how this has influenced her understanding of the world she said, " I don't know.. I just think differently ". Another subject says,

> " What makes me Slavic is just the way I am being brought up..and it is like.. it just.. it is not how the parents bring up their children..it is just the traditions that people follow..the ceremonies..how we pray..so that is the only difference..what we see in American being born here and being here and knowing about what's going..see I don't see it that way at all..I just see myself as Slavic American because I was born here..all these are just traditions..it has no impact on me..there is nothing slavic "

The focus is on what Lotman (1985) calls as the ceremonial part of culture; it is the ritualized aspect that constitutes "culture" in this category. Concepts, whether it be of self, other, or of culture are essentialist in nature in this category.

SELF IDENTITY

SI 2 COLLECTIVE

The subject identifies himself/herself as belonging to a particular group, whether it be ethnicity, religion, gender or any other group (I am like the smart ones in the class) and so on. Such a group identity defines self. Unlike the previous category in which one defined oneself in terms of personal interests, style, the individual has a collective orientation.

CATEGORY III

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

SC3 RELATIONAL - BILATERAL

Multi level simple processes are observed. Here 'self' and 'other' are understood simultaneously. Associations are made based on not just shared interest but shared meanings, lifestyles, values, etc. From this category on self/other and self/culture are intertwined in the narrative structure and content. What is observable here is the Jamesian distinction of "self as a knower" - the 'I' and "self as the known" - the 'Me'. Typically, the subjects describe themselves as, " this is the way I think I am, but my family thinks of me this way, and my friends think I am..." and so on. A multifaceted notion of self is given by the subject. Cultural norms, rules, values as implemented by parents are reasoned about and questioned in terms of its usefulness for building individual character and maintaining balance within cultural institutions such as school, family, etc. For example one girl says,

> " ... my mom sets limits.. what to do and what not to do.. but she is not as strict over there (Greece).. she lets me have my freedom.. but after that she sets limits.. like if I go out with my friends, she tells when to get home.. and about my friends, she tells me I could have when I am older because she knows that sex is on everybody's mind.. and she doesn't want anything bad to happen and I listen.. mothers want the best for their children... ".

What we observe here is the process of internalization of cultural, familial rules. The subject does not accept norms on the face value but rather talks in terms of its usefulness. However unlike the following categories the subject does not probe into what would

happen if cultural norms were not followed. In other words the subject discusses the values and traits that are acceptable to her rational self and then reasons about the usefulness at the present moment, but does not venture into those that are not acceptable to her; as a result we observe at times an over generalization (mothers want the best for their children). However the key factor that differentiates this category from the previous one is that the subject reasons about behavior and finds the underlying causes for institutional or cultural rules as implemented by school or family. However only behavior is analyzed and not thought and thought processes.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

C3 RULE GOVERNED

Culture is understood as a rule governed entity. So culture is seen as the source of contents that are processed by the individual. As represented figuratively in Fig.2, culture is viewed as an authority that lays out rules for proper conduct and code of behavior and the individuals act accordingly. For example one Albanian Muslim girl states,

> "...what I am not supposed to do I don't do.. go out with guys.. dress, perm your hair, things like that.. it is like mostly arranged marriages you know.. that is culture ".

Likewise a Chinese boy talks about "respect for elders' as a cultural value,

> "... so I kind of stay late, but my mother wants me to come home earlier.. and most of

> the time I get home on time.. it is few times that I disobey my parents "

A Chinese girl also expresses a similar sentiment

> " they (Americans) might think that it is natural to put..place their parents in a home and visit once in a while.. they don't visit their parents that much.. or only for Christmas, but in other cultures you know parents expect that from their children, you know... take care of them, visit them.. if parents say something we jump to do it, hurry up on my own.. they command most of my life.. yeah they take charge you know strict obedience you know, listen to them ".

The subjects narrates a personal story to explain a cultural norm and state that as a general rule; as being observable within the culture . Secondly, sharp distinctions between cultures are drawn, but variability within culture is not examined. In many ways culture is viewed as a 'big brother' that watches over you, stops you from doing the 'wrong' things, as said by this Indian boy,

> " well..culture restricts me from doing certain things, tells me things, like not to go to parties, dating.. to me you know it is like respecting my religion.. like I always do my prayers before going to school ".

Thus, the individual here lays out the cultural rules in comparison to the dominant culture, in fact evaluation of these rules take place only in reference to the broad (American) cultural norm as seen by the individual, but the changing nature of these norms are not explored. As a result 'culture' to them becomes very monolithic. The central theme here is "such and such a value, trait, etc is true for such and such a culture and this rule holds good for all the members of a given culture ". The individual here focuses on the invariant properties of culture, and therefore holds a 'static' view of culture. Even though cultural rules are evaluated, its usefulness

is discussed only for the present moment; its past and future applicability are not probed. In general, culture is viewed as 'given'. Binary model (good/bad, self/other, ethnic culture/American culture, etc.) operates at all levels.

SELF-IDENTITY

SI 3 DIVIDED

Identity, is divided between ethnic and broad cultural identity. The individual constantly tries to adjust himself or herself to meet the environmental demands and feels that one is "putting on an act" all the time and life becomes a theatrical event, as this Indian girl says,

> "... I talk like the (American)... but at home it is completely different situation and I won't be like them at all... ".

These two identities are broken down and truncated and no connection is made between the two. The subject often reports having a 'split-personality' (no pathological or pejorative sense implied). The division is not merely between the ethnic identity and broad cultural identity (American), but also between Ethnic American identity versus the home country identity (Indian or Chinese or European). In other words the subject reports feeling alienated from the mainstream culture here in United States and also feels alienated from the culture of their homeland. The following narrative by an Indian boy born and raised in United States, about his visit to India best captures the dilemma,

> " Oh God!... it is the opposite..I am so different from them.. I can't talk to them..

> first of all I don't know the languages.. and sometimes the food is different.. I don't like it.. I don't do things like them.. they don't see people like me a lot.. I am not like the kids in India because I go to school over here.. I have American values in me ".

The dilemma expressed here is that he is not able to relate to and be a part of the mainstream American culture and yet recognizes that he has taken American values and therefore is not able to relate to Indians in India. As a result he feels like an Indian when he comes in contact with American and feels like an American with an Indian in India. Thus ethnicity is defined in relational terms.

In this category there is quite a bit of variability in "divided self". Generally in this case ethnic identity is stronger than the broad cultural identity. In many ways, the individual is untouched by the American culture in some deep sense. As a result the individual does not go deep into the American value system and therefore deals with it at a very superficial level, for example, play baseball or discuss sports, as one Indian boy states,

> " when we go out we play like baseball.. we don't talk about such things.. we don't talk all that stuff "(meaning cultural norms and personal life style).

Secondly it is not always the case that the division in 'self' is produced due to cultural differences. Many of the subjects in the current study live in Queens - a multi ethnic borough, and the peer group in school, in their view is formed according to ethnicity. The subjects often report that most of their school mates are recent immigrants and are are therefore in the process of acculturation as this Taiwanese girl reports,

> " Actually I don't get in touch with an American kid. In Flushing most of them are Orientals. I don't really know the real Americans ".

As a result of living in an ethnic neighborhood the individual is often untouched by the American culture in the deep sense.

The dynamics of the 'divided self' is that the individual often talks of various strategies to hide their cultural norm to cover up possible embarrassment as narrated by this Indian boy,

> ".. like the other kids ask you, why don't you ask that girl out.. I say no.. the excuse that I have to give is that, I don't like her, because if you give another excuse they won't really accept that... ".

The subject goes on to say that the real 'me' does not think of relationships at the present moment. Thus what we observe is that the individual constantly tries to adapt himself/herself to the environmental demands resulting in a "divided self".

CATEGORY IV

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

SC4 DIALOGIC

In this category multi level complex processes are observed. There is an increasing level of differentiation and integration in the cultural system. Unlike the previous category in which the self's relation to the other was in terms of "differentiated me" with "generalized other", category 4 locates the "complex self" in a complex cultural matrix. Thus, neither self nor other are closed units but open; constantly engaging in a dialogue. The subject here

talks of building relationships on several different grounds, sharing similar interests, viewpoint, ethnic background, socio economic background, neighborhood, and so on. The individual does not always look for similarities, but sees differences as a source of enrichment and excitement. In other words one recognizes that a complex set of relations are necessary to match the 'multifaceted self'. For example one subject spoke at great length about friendships based on shared interests, that is making model airplane and computer software, and yet having differences of opinion with those kids in social studies class while discussing US foreign policy. Thus the relationship is not between the whole self and other, but as Bakhtin (as cited by Todorov,1984) says, " the boundary is not the *I*, but this *I* in interrelation with other persons, that is *I* and the ***other***, *I* and ***Thou***. This personalism is semantic and not psychological ". It is the particular aspect of the self that interacts with the particular aspect of the other.

The subject here uses the concrete to explain an abstract idea and then makes the connection between the two. The key factor that differentiates this category from the previous one is the recognition of thought and thought processes. For example one Taiwanese girl observes,

> "... for eastern people it is like <u>you</u> <u>have</u> to do things like you have <u>no choice</u>... it is like people will say I have to study....have to.. you have no choice...like you don't <u>choose</u> and say I don't want to..but it is like you have to...or else you become no body...but for American people..it is like I have a <u>choice</u>.. I would study if I want to but I don't have to.

The subject here goes on to explain how she and her American peer put in the same amount of effort in school work, but she thinks it is out of 'necessity' and her peer thinks it is out of 'choice' . In observing cultural differences the subject here goes beyond the behavior and explores the underlying thought and thought processes, as a result recognizes that even though the motives are the same, the reasons for pursuing such motives could differ, and these differences could be due to differing ideologies between eastern and western cultures.

The discussion in this category is not in terms of good versus bad values but rather one examines the source of such ideologies and its relevance in a particular context. For instance, one observes that extreme collectivism inherent in eastern cultures could lead to passivity and irresponsibility and extreme individualism inherent in American culture could lead to self centeredness and arrogance. Any analysis of self, other and culture are context dependent and evaluation is done both for the present moment and the future. Many Asian adolescents said that they would adhere to their cultural norms and not date right now, however they will not go for arranged marriages when they grow up.

Another key factor that distinguishes this category from the previous one is that the subject is clearly aware of the cultural ramifications as stated by this Indian girl,

> " ... we have come away from India..we don't keep in touch constantly.. when we read letters from India, we can't hear that person's **voice**..it is not personal.. we don't know how they are expressing themselves ".

Thus the subject here emphasizes what Bakhtin would call as the 'voice'; the shared meanings expressed via the genre, that originates in the social realm. The problem that this girl poses - inability to hear the voice, despite sharing a common language and heritage is due to the mismatch in genre. The subject later goes on to say that culture reveals itself not only through the art forms and cultural icons, but also through individual expression. The key factor in this category is the awareness that conscicusness is formed through social interaction.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

C4 COMPLEX AND INTEGRATED

Several cultures are perceived, described and understood. Similarities and differences between cultures are drawn, and the reasons for sharing such commonalities are given. For instance one Taiwanese boy notes,

> " culture is like the community..its history or evolution...like the American came from British...their history....their past.. culture in Taiwan is different, it developed from China... culture makes someone a part of the community they are born into....if you were born in Taiwan, your personality could be different ".

Thus one explains the social, political and historical forces that shape a culture and then connects that to the individual who is a part of it. The focus is not only in what culture does (as in the previous category), but also on how culture gets expressed.

The individual in this category also observes the social reality around them and the changing society, as one Indian boy notes,

> "American culture has changed a lot...it used to be more home like..like me...but now it is different.. two years age when I went to Junior High School, life was so different, kids stay home, they don't wander off...they were good kids, but after coming to JHS they don't stay home at all...always on the phone or always outside..do drugs..drugs are all over.. for many of these kids even their parents smoke and do a lot of bad stuff..also on TV..I guess they learn from TV..."

The subject goes on talk about the process by which drugs have invaded the country, that is from bordering countries to USA to various cities to schools to homes and finally to the individual and the dynamics that operate at each level. Throughout the narrative the individual traces various influences - from parental to social to political. Thus one locates 'self/other' in a very broad socio-cultural matrix. The complexity of culture is understood in an integrated fashion. The key factor in this category is understanding the cultural processes. In discussing the school system in Taiwan and United States, one subject says,

> "....it is so different in Taiwan. You study hard but I think we are not studying for future..but for exams. We study for tests so we study by memorizing..I don't think we are really learning..but here it is different..we study by discussion..and so students in Taiwan are quiet...and the teacher will like the kid who is quiet and listens and studies hard..here it is different."

The subject goes on to say that such a system in Taiwan helps create better respect for elders and teachers in particular, whereas the system in United States helps promote independence and self confidence; thereby each system maintains and promotes their corresponding cultural values that have their own merits and faults.

She further adds that she never thought critically about Taiwanese school system while she was there. Hence the contact with the other lets her see her own, her past and this leads to what Bakhtin (1986) calls as creative understanding. He posits that,

> "... creative understanding does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture, and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her own creative understanding - in time, in space, and in culture ". (p.7)

The kind of explanation offered here is conceptually different from the previous categories which goes along the lines, "schools are strict over there...here it is carefree ". Category 4 provides explanations about cultural processes and also evaluates with some complexity rather than merely in terms of good vs bad.

In this category explanations of 'self' and 'culture' are intertwined in the narrative. While the individual is aware of the cultural ramifications, they also talk about how to resist cultural influences or reject certain norms. Therefore 'self' and 'culture' co-exist; likewise many ethnic groups in a given culture co-exist, but they do not fuse. In other words one does not discuss how the interactions between various groups create never groups changing the very character of these groups. Such a synthesis is observed in the following category.

SELF-IDENTITY

SI 4 INTEGRATED

The individual here is high on both ethnic identity and broad cultural identity (American), and such a diversity and appreciated.

Thus the individual attempts to enrich human experience through these fluid identities. Unlike the previous category in which the subject reports of feelings that he or she is putting a 'false act' that leads to a 'divided self',the individual here is well assimilated and in some ways 'brags' about being able to adapt to different cultures. The word 'cultures' here does not merely refer to one's nationality or ethnicity even though it is inclusive. Cultures mean several layers of social experience, that is home culture, school culture, specialized school culture - whether it be schools like Stuyvescent or Bronx Science or schools that teaches cultural history for example Chinese schools that teach Confuscion teachings or Indian schools that teach Hindu philosophy, dance or music. In short one seeks diversity and enjoys them. Cultural norms are not merely imitated as in the previous category but appreciated with some degree of caution.

CATEGORY V

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

SC 5 DIALECTICAL

The division between self/culture breaks down. Instead self and culture interpenetrate each other. Such a synthesis brings about change in both the systems. They are in a constant state of tension. Self is located in a broad socio-historical, political and evolutionary context. Contradictions in society and self are observed. One argues that the individual psyche is formed by social forces, and yet one can transcend these forces to create newer

systems. Thus 'self' is located in a very broad episteme and understood from that perspective. Therefore 'self' is understood as a historical being. Self is conceived epistemologically as both the "knower" and the "known"; reflecting upon and critically interpreting self and world alike. For example one Indian boy says,

> "... some of the ideas that I have of the world were things that I thought I got myself...OK..this is my independent idea..my own idea..but from talking to other people I found out that's the idea of Hinduism...I read those myths so many times...subconsciously it banged there without knowing it and they are showing themselves again and again in these fashions..those ideas..like theory of gods, circles and so on... So the reason that I am of Indian background and I have exposure to that philosophy...now if I was brought up in a Muslim family...I am sure my philosophy would be altered in whatever way to suit the different aspects of that religion ".

Thus ideas in Category 5 emerge not out of one's own cognitive construction but through social interaction. Thus 'self' is not an "autonomous being" possessing and constructing ideas on its own but a 'relational being" - sharply aware of one's location in the cultural matrix and the connectedness to cultural entities. As a result one becomes a "Vygotskian" or a "Bakhtinian" subject, noting that the origin of higher mental functions is social. The individual is sharply aware of what Bakhtin (Morson & Emerson, 1990) calls as "historicity" - a concept that is both philosophical and historical, in which the cognizing subject not only gives an exposition of a concept but also narrates his own history of historical awareness. What was taken for granted (that he held certain ideas himself), a concept that was spontaneous

(Vygotsky 1987), has now become scientific, and as a result the subject's understanding of his own history and the history of culture sharpens. The acquisition of scientific concepts for Vygotsky is a major developmental event because it restructures and raises everyday concepts to a higher level. The individual in this category has a diachronic understanding of both self and culture.

Likewise, A Rumanian girl who immigrated to United States 4 years back notes,

> "..... I don't like to take charge a lot. I would rather be obedient to somebody else. I cannot...that doesn't mean the very Rumanian is the same way, but I don't think I want to be in charge..a typical Rumanian is intelligent..but unable to think for himself, a lot of times very dependent on a figure above himself, an authority figure. In the east, atleast in Rumania..for political reasons you have to be patriotic. I mean you wouldn't say that the President is a Jackass. Your main duty is to help the country and that gives you a sense of family..sort of a sense of brotherhood with every Rumanian ".

Typically, in this category every proposition made is juxtaposed with its contradiction at some point in the narrative and the individual attempts to explain the variability in self and within culture. While Category 5 recognizes that individuals are part of culture, that is, there is a social, political, economic and cultural basis to individual psyche, it also argues that there could be a discrepancy between the individual and the collective, as narrated by this Indian boy,

> " As a general philosophy, compared to Indian..American culture is more self sustaining..more I... more survival..economically speaking..capitalistic society..competition scores..motivation and all that..I can do this..I can do that..that

> sort of thing..and in India it is more of a we philosophy..family is more important..same with the Chinese...if I do this I will bring shame to my family or my co-workers or my friends..".

At another point in the narrative the same individual resists making any generalization,

> " At the same time to say that I am or I am not like an American kid raised in America..is the question that you really can't ask..because what is an American kid...if you want to take a generality... American kid is what..drink..party..stay out late.. which way..because the way I see it everyone is unique..and you can't compare yourself with a general sort of person ".

Likewise the Rumanian subject notes,

> " Well, I don't like the way western people cling to material things but I do like the ways western people seem to accept most of different cultures and races that exist here. I think there is little tolerance to different race(in east). My parents are very, I think my parents are very prejudiced. I don't like that, that is why I sort of like the western way of relating to other people sometimes ".

And yet at another point in the narrative the subject says that America may be a Capitalist nation and therefore dollar rules, however this does not mean that every individual within the system is materialistic. In essence, as the title of this category suggests, the subjects in their own language argue that the 'individual' and the 'social' create each other through a dialectical process.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE

C5 TRANSFORMATIONAL

Culture is understood as a constantly changing entity through human interaction and historical process. Observing the changing society and yet noting the invariant properties of culture become central to one's understanding. Variability within a culture is noted before getting into differences between cultures. As a general rule one resists making any generalized statement about any culture without explanations. Since this category looks at the variability within culture, its understanding of sub cultures deepens, as one Indian girl notes,

> " just go take a walk in Main street, and you see everything..Indian shop here, right next to a Chinese shop...it is also sometimes a helping center, it is just the experience of coming to America..just take a walk around..you would be learning so much about culture ".

She goes to say that various ethnic groups in America or atleast in New York city interact to determine the character of the country and the culture as she notes, " you don't see this type of culture anywhere in the world except in America ". In this category cultural icons and their symbolic meanings are understood, as noted by this individual,

> " Culture..as far as I am concerned is a different independent kind of series of philosophy, religion...art.. anything of that sort with a common denominator..the common denominator being the nation...The India..see, you hear music, you recognize the Sitar...it is common to that culture..to see a dancer..you see the costume and you will see the movements..OK...that's Indian..on the other hand you recognize say ...African

> culture which is so varied in so many ways.. the drums..".

Thus Category 5 defines and describes the properties of culture, how to recognize it, how it operates, and discusses the invisibility of some aspects of culture to its members, as noted by an Indian girl,

> " ..every one has heritage..some people express it a little bit more than others..and some people have learnt about it more I guess ".

Thus 'culture' is understood as a set of beliefs and norms historically evolved through social, political and economic and religious forces maintained and transformed through human interaction. This category argues for the inseparability of self and culture; understanding of one entails the understanding of the other, as one subject notes, "culture lets you find who you are and your niche ".

SELF-IDENTITY

SI 5 DYNAMIC

Identity here is not defined merely in terms of ethnic and broad identity, but rather in terms of the dynamics that operate in the face of biculturalism. Unlike the previous category that appreciates the diversity, the individual here both appreciates and recognizes the tension inherent in biculturalism, as this Rumanian girl states,

> " I think it is very helpful to go through this process of acquiring two cultures.. and so you may be comfortable in both and yet different from them... I think I blend with American culture and I also blend with

> Rumanian culture...and I don't consider any of them my own. I think I have a culture... right now my personality is so different from them..yet the basis of my personality is from both of them .. may be my personality isn't formed yet..because I don't like the way it is now.. ".

As a result of recognizing the tension, identity is not static, but dynamic, and the changing self is observed. Centrifugal and centripetal forces are noticed, that is self on one hand resists change and yet sees the change taking place as a result of various forces - cultural and personal. Thus identity is constantly evolving and is in a state of tension.

RESULTS

In order to examine how the 5 categories in 3 themes - (a) "self within the cultural system", (b) "conceptualization of culture", (c) "self Identity", were intertwined or interrelated, Spearman Rank Order Correlation was done. The results indicate a very high correlation between the various categories in these three themes.

Insert Table 2 here

The categories in " self within the cultural system " parallels with the categories in " conceptualization of culture ". In other words, 'self's' location in the cultural matrix and one's understanding of culture had an effect on each other. The greater the complexity of cultural matrix, the greater was the understanding of the connectedness between various cultural institutions - the family, school, ethnicity, economic system, political system and so on. The question that could be raised here is if these two themes - "self within the cultural system" and "conceptualization of culture" are independent, having properties of their own. The two themes are often intertwined in the subject's narrative, but the distinction between the themes in this study is drawn for conceptual and explanatory purposes. Just as how understanding of 'self' and 'other' is simultaneous, and such an understanding proceeds in a parallel fashion (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979), understanding of self's relation to culture and vice versa seem to

be tightly intertwined. Secondly, these two themes in categories 1,2, and 3 seemed to be distinctly separate in the subjects' narrative. The relationship between 'self' and 'culture' was in a dualistic fashion in these categories, whereas an inseparability and synthesis was observed in individual's understanding of self/culture in categories 4, and 5.

Since the categories in these 3 themes were so highly correlated, the " self within the cultural system " was chosen to examine its relationship to other variables, like frequency of visit to the native country and time of arrival in United States. The correlation between the various conceptual categories in " self within the cultural system " and " frequency of visit to the native country " was 0.95. So the frequency of visit to their native country had a strong relationship to the conceptual categories that they were likely to fall. In other words up to a certain point, the visits to one's native country may have raised new questions about their selves, their history, and about culture in general. If the frequency of visit had a bearing on the individual's conceptual categories, the question then would be to what extent is this factor crucial ? An examination of the distribution of subjects in various categories according to the frequency of visit provides a clearer picture of the phenomena. Such an examination reveals that

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Insert Table 4 here

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the proportion of subjects in various categories progressively increases with the frequency of visit. In category 1 and 2, 80% of the subjects have never visited their native country, whereas the distribution in the categories becomes slightly more even, with rare visits. That is, 40% of the subjects in category 3 have visited their native country once or twice, compared to 20% in the 'No Visit' slot. One observes a sharp increase with occasional visits - 67% fall in category 3 and the linear trend drops when the visits become too frequent, that is almost every year.

A similar trend may be observed when we examine the data on the immigrant children (Foreign born). The more recent arrivals tend to fall in category 4 and 5, whereas those who arrived about 6 - 10 years are distributed a little more evenly between category 2 to 4 - with 50% in category 2 (see Table 4) Here again the recent immigrants report experiencing "otherness" and are struck by different school system and different set of social relations that exist here in United States compared to their native countries. This sort of "compare and contrast" between cultures sharpen their understanding of "self" and "culture". Secondly the assimilation process itself as J.W Berry (1980) notes, triggers some dynamics about social relations, familial relations that lead to a basic reorganization of one's psyche. Such a reorganization may lead to to what Bakhtin (1986) calls as "creative understanding" about culture or the subject may feel the cultural displacement so strongly that they feel uprooted and fragmented which leads to a "divided self". It may be observed that a large proportion of subjects, especially the Asians fall in the "divided" self Identity category (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

The theory of dialogism posits that knowledge about self and other is not always so transparent for the cognizing subject to 'discover' or 'construct' through rational means; rather this knowledge is always a process - constantly being made and unmade. This process is a joint enterprise in which self and other are co-participants giving meaning to each other's words and actions. Bakhtin places a great deal of emphasis on the situatedness of the knowing subject (Wertsch, 1991). Therefore questions about selfhood can be pursued only if they are treated as specific questions about location (Holquist, 1990). In the current study, the location of the individual becomes central in the way they construe 'self'. What they think about themselves radically shifts when they visit their home country.

Developmental studies in the area of 'self' have often treated self as a cognitive concept. Damon and Hart (1982) argue that research on self-understanding must be separated from other socio-cognitive achievements - such as understanding other people. It is this idea of "know thyself" inherent in Western epistemelogical tradition that Bakhtin problematizes, for any knowledge of self is always an *event* and never a *state*. The self is always co-authored by the other.

The current study indicates that individuals locate themselves in a cultural matrix and have an understanding, at varying conceptual levels, that the basis for their behavior, thought, and thought processes is cultural. In the wake of

biculturalism one observes the changing self, and recognizes the cultural ramifications. As a result self/culture are tightly intertwined; understanding of one leads to an understanding of the other. Such an understanding is triggered by facing the "otherness" - being seen and understood by other, which supports the Bakhtinian (1986) view that one cannot really see one's own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, for the real exterior can be seen only by other people, as they are located outside the individual in space and in culture and more importantly because they are <u>others</u>. Therefore such a dialogic encounter leads one to look for the basis of their selves. While the adolescent in Damon and Hart (1982) study understands 'self' through the development of individual moral value and standards, the adolescents in the current study looks for the source of value system, and argues that values are culturally determined. Secondly, in this study we observe a variability in one's view on value system. For instance, in category 3, subjects viewed value systems as culturally given, whereas category 5 argues that values are maintained and transformed through social interactions. The narratives of the subjects' indicate that one understands 'self' with varying degrees of differentiation and hierarchic integration, as a 'cultural being' - connected to and determined by various cultural institutions - family, school, religion, social, political and economic systems. Such an awareness of cultural ramifications, as the subjects themselves say, (I don't think of being Chinese, Rumanian, or Indian when in China, Rumania or India), may be unique, if not exclusive to their experiences in their adopted land. While no assertions can be made, one may raise

some questions for further research. Can we expect to find similar trends if we studied Indians in India or Chinese in China and let us say hypothetically Americans in India or China. If one finds similar results, then one could find a stronger support to the Bakhtinian notion that culture reveals itself fully and profoundly in the eyes of another culture.

If we adopt Bakhtin's view of dialogics, then it is necessary to apply this principle to the very process of conceptualizing the study (the impetus for this study comes from my own experience as an immigrant) and generating the narrative. One can argue for different layers of subjects' connectedness and relationship to the researcher, the researcher being a female of Indian origin. The Indian subjects could come into the study with a prior understanding that there may be a shared meaning with the researcher, a belief that their experiences are going to be understood by the researcher. Likewise the Orientals may have assumed a shared meaning with a fellow Asian. While it is difficult to pin point which of these could have been a major factor, it is nevertheless important to bear these issues in mind. In general, majority of the European sample, especially the boys viewed my questions with surprise. It is difficult to say if this was the result of gender dynamics or the result of 'biculturalism' not being an issue for them. A similar trend was observed even among the Asians, with a lesser degree, especially the ones who have been here so long that they have been submerged in this cultural system. Most Asians and recent immigrants from Europe understood the thrust of the questioning and were forthcoming with their responses.

From a developmental stand point, one may raise the question, if the various categories are sequential. In other words does the individual go through a step-wise sequence in understanding self and culture? The 5 conceptual categories in this study proceed from an undifferentiated state to increasing levels of differentiation and integration. Instead of positing the movement from one category to another as sequential and irreversible, as in the stage theories, it is more useful to conceptualize the movement through various categories as a movement from everyday concept to scientific concept (Vygotsky, 1987). The scientific concept which is acquired through formal instruction brings the everyday concept to conscious awareness and volition for the subject. In the current study the taken for granted social and cultural codes (everyday concept) are brought into focus as a result of dialogic encounter. Once these concepts become transparent, it becomes semioticized - as a result becomes a scientific concept and the individual actively gives meaning to it and internalizes it. Vygotsky further argues that the scientific concept does not remain to be a scientific concept forever, rather it eventually becomes an everyday concept once the concept is mastered. Outsideness is a powerful factor in the acquisition of scientific concepts. It is like learning a foreign language. However as one learns the formal structure of a foreign language the rules of native language becomes visible. Vygotsky refers to Goethe who said that one who does not know another language does not fully know his own. Similarly, Bakhtin says that as you learn about a new culture you learn about your own, that is any culture reveals itself in the eyes of another culture. This does

not mean that the revelation is so automatic for the individual to comprehend, rather as the otherness or difference is experienced the individual actively gives meaning to that experience. The individual is not merely "constituted by culture" and but one is also actively "constituting culture"; as a result understanding of self and culture is essentially a hermeneutic process as Lotman (1990) says,

> " Humanity, immersed in its cultural space, always creates around itself an organized spatial sphere. This sphere includes both ideas and semiotic models and people's recreative activity, since the world which people artificially create correlates with their semiotic models" (p203).

To conclude, the present study attempted to study the dynamics of culture as experienced by the individual. How does culture operate in our behavior, thought, actions, our philosophy and so on? Does culture operate at the conscious level for the individual? These questions had varying responses from the individuals. Individuals understanding of culture ranged from purely physicalistic notions to a very complex understanding of social, political and economic systems and its relationship to self. The narratives, thus ranged from an undifferentiated to dualistic to dialectical notions of self/culture

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FIGURE 1

CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES IN THE THEMES

THEMES	SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM	CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE	SELF IDENTITY
CATEGORIES			
1	NON RELATIONAL SUBJECTIVISM/ OBJECTIVISM	PHYSICALISTIC	PERSONAL
2	RELATIONAL-UNILATERAL	DESCRIPTIVE & COMPARATIVE	COLLECTIVE
3	RELATIONAL-BILATERAL	RULE GOVERNED	DIVIDED
4	DIALOGIC	COMPLEX	INTEGRATED
5	DIALECTICAL	TRANSFORMATIONAL	DYNAMIC

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO THE PLACE OF BIRTH AND FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE NATIVE COUNTRY BY ETHNICITY AND GENDER

	BORN IN USA				FOREIGN BORN	
	FREQUENCY OF VISIT				TIME OF ARRIVAL	
*	NONE	RARE	OCCASIONAL	FREQUENT	0-4 YRS BACK	5+ YRS BACK
EUROPEAN						
BOYS	50%	50%	-	-	-	-
GIRLS	25%	25%	-	25%	25%	-
ORIENTAL						
BOYS	25%	25%	-	-	-	50%
GIRLS	-	25%	-	-	25%	50%
INDIAN						
BOYS	25%	25%	-	50%	-	-
GIRLS	-	-	50%	50%	-	-

* NONE = NO VISITS; RARE = 1-2 VISITS; OCCASIONAL = 3-4 VISITS; FREQUENT = ALMOST EVERY YEAR.

TABLE 2

SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES IN THREE DIFFERENT THEMES

a. Correlation between various categories in " Self within the cultural system " and " Conceptualization of culture "	.998
b. Correlation between various categories in " Self within the cultural system " and " Self Identity "	.995
Correlation between various categories in " Conceptualization of culture " and " Self Identity "	.994

TABLE 3

SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATION BETWEEN SUBJECTS' FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE NATIVE COUNTRY AND THE CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES THEY BELONG IN " SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM " THEME

CORRELATION BETWEEN " FREQUENCY OF VISIT " AND VARIOUS CATEGORIES IN " SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM "	.95

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO THE PLACE OF BIRTH AND FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE NATIVE COUNTRY

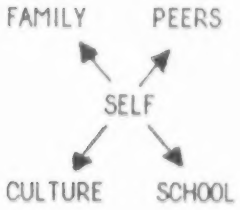
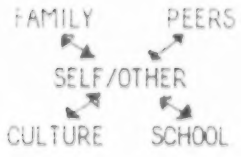
CATEGORIES	NON RELATIONAL SUBJECTIVISM/ OBJECTIVISM	RELATIONAL UNILATERAL	RELATIONAL BILATERAL	DIALOGIC	DIALECTICAL
	1	2	3	4	5
BORN IN USA FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO NATIVE COUNTRY					
NEVER (NO VISIT)	**40%**	**40%**	20%	-	-
RARELY (1 OR 2 VISITS)	20%	20%	**40%**	20%	-
OCCASIONAL (3 - 4 VISITS)	-	-	**67%**	33%	-
FREQUENT (ALMOST EVERY YEAR)	-	20%	20%	**40%**	**20%**
FOREIGN BORN (NO VISIT TO NATIVE COUNTRY)					
ARRIVED IN USA 0-4 YEARS BACK	-	-	-	**50%**	**50%**
ARRIVED IN USA 6-10 YEARS BACK	-	50%	25%	25%	-

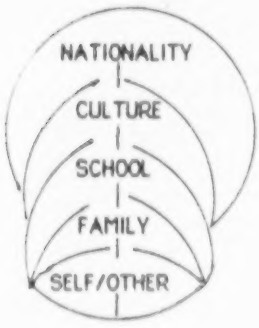
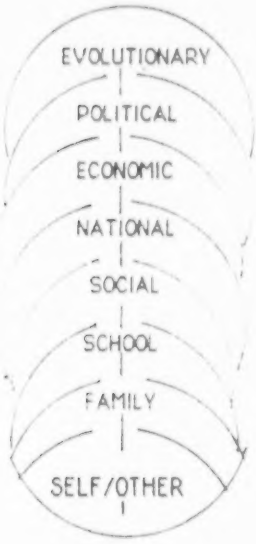
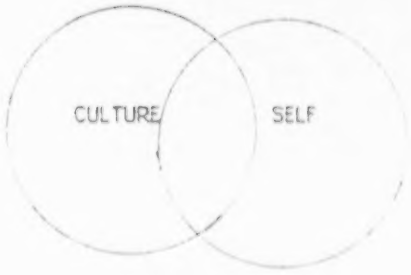
TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS IN " SELF IDENTITY " THEME BY ETHNICITY

	PERSONAL	COLLECTIVE	DIVIDED	INTEGRATED	DYNAMIC
CATEGORIES	SI 1	SI 2	SI 3	SI 4	SI 5
EUROPEAN					
BOYS	75%	25%	-	-	-
GIRLS	-	50%	25%	-	25%
ORIENTAL					
BOYS	25%	-	75%	-	-
GIRLS	-	25%	75%	-	-
INDIAN					
BOYS	-	-	75%	-	25%
GIRLS	-	25%	50%	25%	-

FIGURE 2

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM	CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE	SELF IDENTITY
SC 1	**C 1**	**SI 1**
NON RELATIONAL SUBJECTIVISM/ OBJECTIVISM	PHYSICALISTIC	PERSONAL
SC 2	**C 2**	**SI 2**
RELATIONAL - UNILATERAL	DESCRIPTIVE &COMPARATIVE	COLLECTIVE
	ETHNIC CULTURE VS BROAD CULTURE	
SC 3	**C 3**	**SI 3**
RELATIONAL - BILATERAL	RULE GOVERNED	DIVIDED
		HIGH ETHNIC IDENTITY LOW BROAD IDENTITY

SELF WITHIN THE CULTURAL SYSTEM	CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE	SELF IDENTITY
SC 4	C 4	SI 4
DIALOGIC SELF/CULTURE CO-EXIST	COMPLEX	INTEGRATED
		HIGH ETHNIC IDENTITY HIGH BROAD IDENTITY
SC 5	C 5	SI 5
DIALECTICAL SELF/CULTURE INTERPENETRATE	TRANSFORMATIONAL	DYNAMIC SELF AS A PROCESS
		

APPENDIX 1

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. NAME: _____

2. AGE: _____ 3. SEX: a. Female ____ b. Male ____

4. FAMILY SIZE: _____ 5. BIRTH ORDER: _____

6. ETHNICITY: _____

7. # OF YEARS IN USA : _____

8. WHEN DID THE PARENTS IMMIGRATE? _____

9. PARENT'S PROFESSION : a. Father _____

b. Mother _____

10. FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO NATIVE COUNTRY _____

_____